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March 16, 2016

The Honorable David Marks  
The Baltimore County Council  
Old Courthouse – Second Floor  
400 Washington Avenue  
Towson, Maryland 21204**RE: Application for Planned Unit Development for Towson Gateway**  
Applicant: CVP-TF, LLC  
Address: 800 York Road, Towson  
Parcel Identification: Tax Map 0070, Parcel 998  
5<sup>th</sup> Councilmanic District, 9<sup>th</sup> Election District

Dear Councilman Marks:

In compliance with Section 32-4-242 of the Baltimore County Code (“BCC”), CVP-TF, LLC (“Applicant”) submits this application for a General Development Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) for the “Towson Gateway” project on land currently owned by Baltimore County located on the southeast corner of the intersection of York Road and Bosley Avenue. The PUD is proposed on 5.80± acres (gross) of a larger tax parcel (“the Property”). The Property is zoned predominantly BM-CT (Business, Major – Commercial, Town-Center Core) with a sliver of BR-AS (Business, Roadside – Automotive Services).

Applicant is an entity controlled by Caves Valley Partners (“CVP”), a partnership of seasoned developers with a proven track record for developing quality projects in Baltimore County, Baltimore City, and beyond. CVP principals Arthur Adler and Steve Sibel, collectively, have over 30 years of experience with a wide variety of land development projects, including residential, commercial, and mixed-use developments. Applicant contracted to purchase the Property after being awarded the right to exclusive negotiations through a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) process implemented by the County. Applicant’s contract with the County requires that it submit a PUD Application for development of the Property as described in the RFP response. In satisfaction of that requirement, Applicant now submits this PUD Application to you for consideration.

Through this PUD proposal, Applicant seeks to develop the Property with an attractive commercial center – “Towson Gateway” – that fits contextually with surrounding uses and create a welcoming focal point and streetscape using hardscaping, landscaping, and monument signage.

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After reviewing the enclosed information, we hope that you will support Applicant's proposal and allow it to proceed through the PUD process.

**I. DESCRIPTION OF PUD PROPOSAL:**

The Property is located on the southeast corner of the intersection of York Road and Bosley Avenue. Prominently situated along this busy commercial corridor, the Property, for all intents and purposes, acts as the "gateway" to Towson for those entering Towson from points north and west. The Property is the former location of the Towson Fire Station and is improved with buildings and equipment associated with that former use; it is also improved with buildings associated with other public functions, such as storage of road salt. Other improvements on the Property include a communications tower, a critical component of the County's communications network, and a parking lot leased to the owners of the adjacent Towson Diner.

In its current configuration and condition, the Property does not provide a fitting entrance into what is considered to be the "urban center of Baltimore County."<sup>1</sup> Through the Towson Gateway PUD, Applicant seeks not only to redevelop the Property with a vibrant commercial development, but also to provide a striking focal point to mark one's arrival in Towson.

Applicant's proposal starts with subdividing the Property into two lots. Lot 1 (0.38± acres) will encompass the tower and parking lot area. Baltimore County will retain ownership of this lot (the "County lot"), on which the County will retain the existing tower and will continue to lease the parking lot for use by Towson Diner patrons. Lot 2 (the remaining 4.65± acres) will be utilized for purposes of the PUD (the "Development Parcel").

On the Development Parcel, Applicant proposes to raze the existing buildings and redevelop the site with an attractive and upscale commercial center to be known as "Towson Gateway." This center will feature approximately 22,334± square feet of retail/restaurant space and a combination Royal Farms fuel service station/convenience store/carry out restaurant (approximately 5,166± square feet). See enclosed Preliminary Schematic Plan and Rendering.

A consistent design theme will be carried throughout the Towson Gateway project and will include the use of high-quality materials, a natural color palette, and enhanced architectural elements. See enclosed Architectural Perspectives. Applicant's architect has worked closely with Royal Farms to ensure that this theme will be continued on the convenience store building, fuel canopy, and associated components.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Baltimore County Master Plan 2020*, p. 80: "Towson is the urban center of Baltimore County. In addition to the being the seat of county government, it is the site of a substantial business district, three large hospitals, the circuit court and district court, two universities, and the Towson Town Center – a regional mall. The urban core of Towson is becoming a residential center as well...."

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The site will provide pedestrian connections to existing sidewalks on York and Bosley and will ensure ease of access between the commercial buildings on the site. Prominent feature walls with decorative fencing and signage will create a consistent street edge and provide a stunning focal point at the road intersection.

At this early stage, the plans and perspectives provided are, of course, preliminary. As it moves forward in the process, Applicant will seek input on the proposed design from your office, the County agencies, and community members. Applicant is committed to having an open dialogue throughout the process, if the PUD proposal is authorized to proceed.

## II. REQUIREMENTS FOR PUD APPLICATION:

BCC Section 32-4-242(b) specifically requires an applicant to describe the projected impacts of the PUD on the surrounding area, to define the proposed community benefit, and to demonstrate how the project will meet the compatibility objectives outlined in BCC Section 32-4-402. The following information will address those requirements.

### A. PROJECTED IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT:

**Water/Sewer:** The Property is served by public water and sewer. According to the 2015 Basic Services Maps, the site is not within a deficient area or area of special concern for either water or sewer. The County's water and sewer infrastructure are sufficient to serve this project.

**Transportation/Roads:** According to the 2015 Basic Services Maps, the Property is not within a deficient area for transportation, and the existing road network is adequate to handle the anticipated traffic volumes from this development.

**Environmental:** Under existing conditions, the Property is largely impervious, and it has no existing environmental resources or stormwater management measures. Applicant proposes to pay a "fee-in-lieu" instead of providing afforestation onsite, which is standard protocol for urban redevelopment projects. Applicant will comply with current stormwater management regulations, and, to meet the applicable requirements, Applicant proposes to use a combination of Filterra bioretention systems and an underground vault.

**Schools:** Towson Gateway has no residential component and, therefore, will have no impact on area schools.

**Police and Fire:** The site is served by the Towson Precincts for both police and fire. Both precincts are (or will be) located approximately ¾ mile from the Property at the vicinity of

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intersection of Bosley Avenue and Towsontown Boulevard. The proposed development will not adversely impact the County's ability to provide police and fire services.

**B. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

Proposed PUD Site Acreage:	5.80± Acres (Gross) 5.03± Acres (Net)
Existing Zoning:	BM-CT (5.792± Acres) BR-AS (.008± Acres)
Existing Use:	Towson Fire Station; Communications Tower; Miscellaneous Public Uses; Parking Lot
Proposed Use:	Retail, Restaurant, Fuel Service Station use in combination with a convenience store and carry-out restaurant; Communications Tower; Parking Lot
Allowed Floor Area Ratio:	BM-CT (of Towson): 5.5
Existing Floor Area Ratio:	0.15±
Proposed Floor Area Ratio:	0.12±
Required Number of Parking Spaces:	221±
Proposed Number of Parking Spaces:	221±

**C. COMMUNITY BENEFIT**

BCC Section 32-4-242(b)(6) requires that an applicant state how the planned unit development will provide a community benefit. Applicant proposes to make a contribution of \$50,000 for use at the recreational fields located behind the Bykota Senior Center, which will serve as a capital improvement benefit under Section 32-4-242(b)(6)(iii).

**D. MASTER PLAN CONSISTENCY**

This project is consistent with the goals of the *Baltimore County Master Plan 2020*. The Development Parcel is located within the T-6 (Urban Core Zone) Transect and the Towson Urban Area, as designated within the *Master Plan*. The T-6 Transect boasts "the highest density and height, with the greatest variety of uses." *Master Plan 2020*, p. 31. The *Master Plan* suggests that the Towson Urban Area is slated "to become a dynamic, economically viable

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commercial center.” *Master Plan 2020*, p. 82. The Towson Gateway project will take an underutilized property in a prime location and create a vibrant commercial center. The *Master Plan* also emphasizes the goal of creating inviting and walkable environments for pedestrians in the Towson Focus Area and suggests a number of mechanisms to achieve this goal. *Master Plan 2020*, p. 82. Applicant’s proposal will achieve several of these goals, including: (i) provision of broad sidewalks along the York and Bosley frontages; (ii) orientation of store fronts toward both road frontages “to boost visual interest along the street”; (iii) use of decorative walls or fences to define the street edge; and (iii) the recognition of the York and Bosley intersection as a natural “gateway” into downtown Towson, where Applicant, in consultation with you and reviewing County agencies, will design and install a “gateway” feature at this key location. *Master Plan 2020*, pp. 82-84.

#### **E. COMPATIBILITY**

Pursuant to BCC Section 32-4-242(b)(5), an application for a PUD must include a statement of how the development will comply with the compatibility objectives of BCC Section 32-4-402. In addressing the compatibility objectives, a project must be judged in relation to the “neighborhood.” Section 32-4-402(a) defines “neighborhood” to include existing buildings adjacent to and extending from the proposed development to a definable boundary, such as a primary collector or arterial street, an area with a significant change in character or land use, or a major natural feature.

Applying this definition to the Development Parcel, the relevant neighborhood should be defined to include the stretch of commercially zoned properties on either side of York Road along this corridor, extending from the I-695 (North) exit ramp south to the Prospect Hill Cemetery. This “neighborhood” consists of a wide variety of commercial, retail, restaurant, and service uses, including: fast food, carryout and standard restaurants, automobile sales lots, pharmacies, fuel service stations, dry cleaning establishment, nail salon, bank, emergency care and veterinarian care, automobile repair and service, etc. The buildings along this corridor vary significantly in terms of age, condition, and architectural style.

#### **Compatibility Objectives:**

- 1. The arrangement and orientation of the proposed buildings and site improvements are patterned in a similar manner to those in the neighborhood.**

Along this stretch of York Road, with a few exceptions, the buildings tend to be located close to the street edge and any available parking is located to the front, sides or rear of the building or a combination thereof. The lots in the neighborhood generally are not very deep. On the

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Development Parcel, the existing grades will prevent the commercial buildings from being located close to the road frontage. The buildings will be placed farther back into the site, and parking will be in front of the buildings and close to access points. Instead of creating a street edge through the use of actual buildings, Applicant proposes to create this edge by using decorative walls and fencing and lush landscaping situated along the public sidewalks. This layout is similar to the property at the opposite end of the neighborhood where Safeway and CVS are located.

**2. The building and parking lot layouts reinforce existing building and streetscape patterns assure that the placement of buildings and parking lots have no adverse impact on the neighborhood.**

The two multi-tenant buildings are oriented to face the road frontages with parking located in front of the buildings. The site's topography, together with the proposed landscape and hardscape buffers, will limit visibility of backs of the buildings as well as visibility of the parking field from street view, which ensures that the layout will not adversely impact the neighborhood.

**3. The proposed streets are connected with the existing neighborhood road network wherever possible and the proposed sidewalks are located to support the functional patterns of the neighborhood.**

Vehicular access is proposed from both York Road and Bosley Avenue in the approximate locations of the existing access points. Pedestrian connections will be provided to existing sidewalks on York and Bosley consistent with those provided by other properties along this commercial corridor.

**4. The open spaces of the proposed development reinforce the open space patterns of the neighborhood in form and siting and complement existing open space systems.**

Along this busy commercial corridor, the opportunity for open space is limited. This condition is not unusual for such an urban area. What open areas are proposed will be heavily landscaped to provide appropriate buffers. As the project proceeds, Applicant will explore the possibility of adding small sitting areas or other outdoor spaces within the Development Parcel.

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**5. Locally significant features of the site such as distinctive buildings or vistas are integrated into the site design.**

Because of the significant grade change on site, retaining walls will be necessary, but will be used as a design feature and, along with plantings, will help define the street edge. This change in grade will give the site “presence” when viewed by those approaching from points north and west.

**6. The proposed landscape design complements the neighborhood’s landscape patterns and reinforces its functional qualities.**

The landscape design for the Towson Gateway project will feature the use of lush plantings and “Towson” stone retaining walls, accented by decorative black fencing, to create an attractive street edge along both York Road and Bosley Avenue. Two examples where this type of treatment has been utilized to mask parking areas include Ruck Funeral Home and Lexus of Towson. Project signage will be integrated into the retaining wall at the street intersection and will create an attractive focal point.

**7. The exterior signs, site lighting, and accessory structures support a uniform architectural theme and present a harmonious visual relationship with the surrounding neighborhood.**

Exterior signage will be compatible in scale with that of other retailers in the neighborhood and will complement the architectural treatment of the proposed buildings. Both the site identification signage and signage integrated into the retaining wall will have a consistent design theme and will incorporate the “Towson” stone into their design. Decorative street lamps, similar to those in place along much of York Road, will be utilized.

**8. The scale, proportions, massing, and detailing of the proposed buildings are in proportion to those existing in the neighborhood.**

The proposed buildings will be one-story in height and will be similar in scale and massing to the other commercial uses in the neighborhood. The materials proposed will include stone similar to that found on other buildings in the neighborhood, such as Ruxton Cleaners, Towson Veterinary Hospital, and Goodwill. Architectural elements, such as standing-seam metal canopies and flat roofs, will create a contemporary appearance consistent with several of the new or renovated commercial buildings in the neighborhood, including the Hyundai dealership, McDonald’s, and Walgreens, and with some of the residential and institutional buildings constructed in the

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vicinity, like as the Carver School and the Towson Promenade. As another reference point outside of the neighborhood, a similar design aesthetic is employed on the Crate and Barrel façade, many of the new restaurants, and the redeveloped Towson Commons building.

Once you have had an opportunity to review the application and conceptual site plan, we hope that you will support Applicant's request for a General Development PUD for Towson Gateway.

Very truly yours,

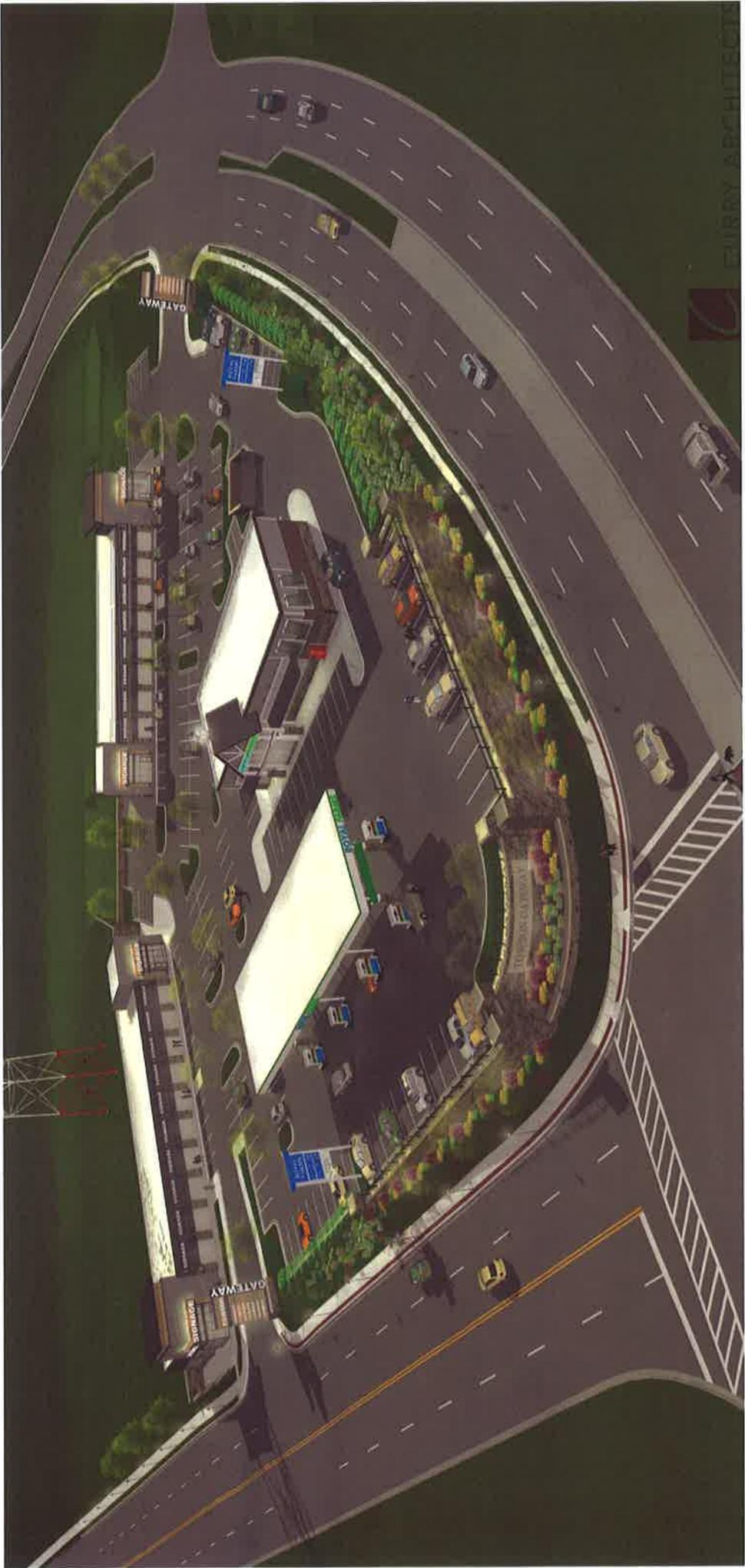


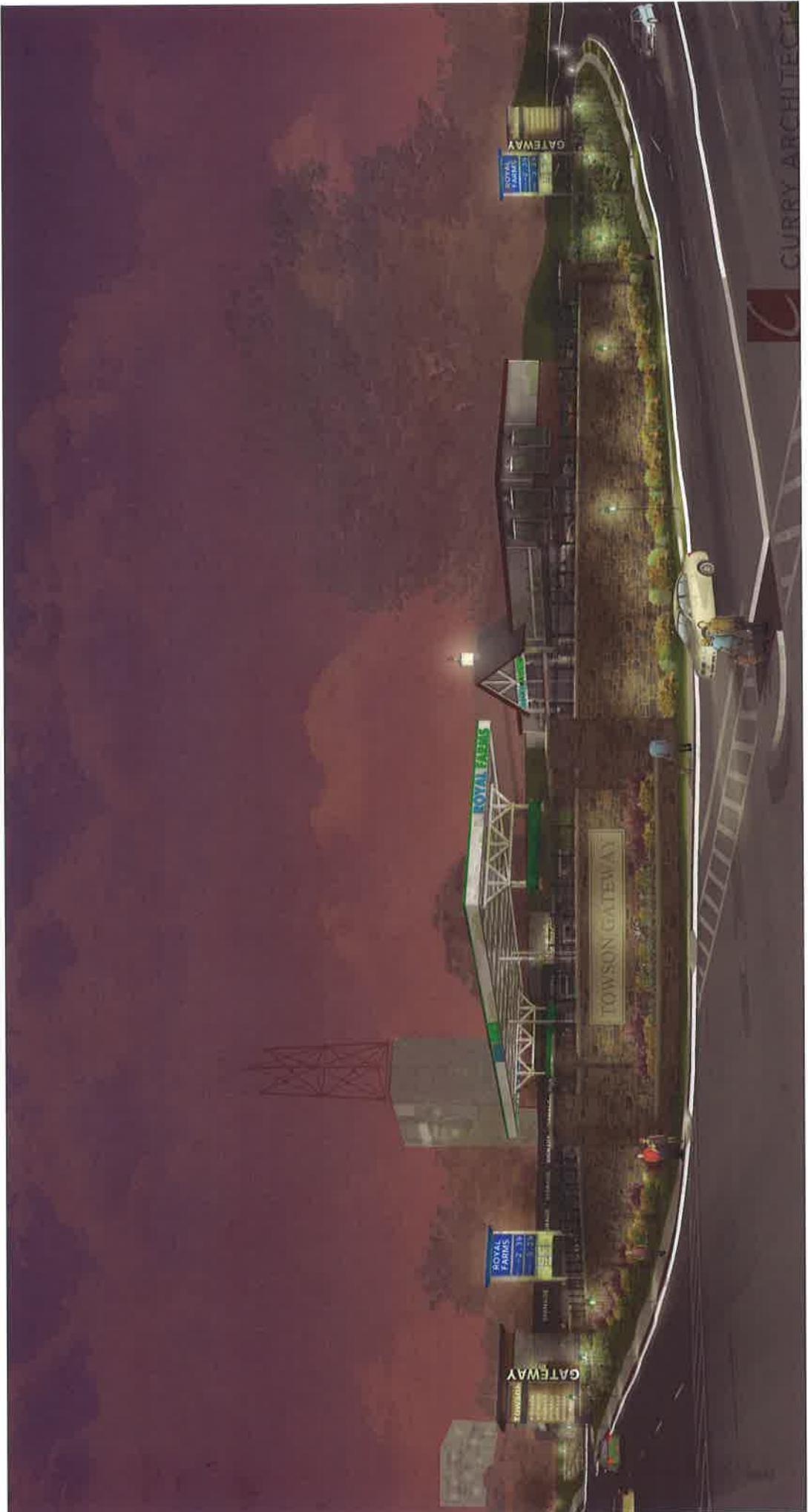
Christopher D. Mudd

Enclosures

cc: Arthur Adler







CURRY ARCHITECTS

